Time-bound trial

760. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

11. whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in The Pioneer, dated 24th September, 1997, under the caption "Time-bound trial is the need of the hour";

12. if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

13. the steps taken to remedy the faulty and tardy police investigations and to reduce burden on the judiciary which help the accused in tampering with the evidences and go scot free?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) Yes sir.

(b) and (c) The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill 1994 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 9.5.1994, which contains a few provisions regarding speedy trial and disposal of cases. Further the Law Commission of India has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Criminal Procedure Code. The Law Commission in its 154th Report has made several recommendations with regard to speedy disposal of cases viz. separate and exclusive cadre for investigating agency, timely attendance of witnesses, protection and facilities to witnesses, setting up of a separate Directorate of Prosecution, addition of new sub-section 41A on custodial crimes. Protection of under trial prisoners, empowering all the criminal Courts to take bail, appointment of Special Magistrates under section 13 and 18 of the Criminal Procedure Code for disposal of petty cases, compensation to crime victims, summary trial procedure for recording evidence, etc. The Report has been circulated to all the State Government for eliciting their comments/ views.

Ministerial Panel on Poll Reforms

761. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

19. whether it is a fact that a ministerial panel has been set-up on poll reforms; and

20. if so, the details thereof and by when this panel is supposed to submit its recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) and (b) A Group of Ministers under the chairmenship of the Home Minister has been constituted to consider the proposals on electoral reforms, including proposals for amending section 8 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and to make its recommendations. A meeting of the Group has already been held on 5.11.1997 and its recommendations arc expected shortly.

Strength of Judges for the Sikkim High Court

762. SHRI MAHESWHAR SINGH: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

21. the total strength of the Judges for the Sikkim High Court and how many Judges are there at present; and

22. how many Judges have been appointed from outside the State and how many of them arc from the initially appointed lot as per the policy of l/3rd from the Home State as in all High Courts; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) Against the sanctioned strength of 3 Judges, as on 1.11.1997, there was one Judge in position in the Sikkim High Court.